



# Catfish Processing

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## Catfish Processing Up Slightly from Last Year

Farm-raised catfish processed during December 2012 totaled 22.7 million pounds round weight, up slightly from December 2011. The average price paid to producers was 83.0 cents per pound for December 2012, up 0.8 cent from last month but 42.1 cents below a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during December 2012 totaled 12.7 million pounds, up 12 percent from the comparable month in 2011. Sales of fresh fish, at 4.65 million pounds, were up 11 percent from December 2011 and represented 37 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 8.06 million pounds, were up 13 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 63 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 22 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 58 percent, and the remaining 20 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products. The total end of the month inventory decreased 4 percent from last month and was down 25 percent from a year ago.

The total fresh and frozen average price for December 2012 was \$2.79, down 73 cents from a year ago. The December 2012 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.59 per pound, down 88 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.78 per pound, down 67 cents from December 2011. Prices for fresh fillets were down \$1.05 from a year ago at \$3.73 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.91 per pound, down 64 cents from December 2011. Prices for frozen whole dressed fish were down 33 cents at \$2.78 and frozen fillets at \$3.17 per pound were down \$1.12 from a year ago.

Imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes for November 2012 totaled 19.2 million pounds, down 14 percent from the amount imported in November 2011. Imports were from Brazil, China, Japan, and Vietnam. The *Ictalurus* spp. imports totaled 331 thousand pounds, which were from China.

Fresh catfish fillet exports totaled 64.9 thousand pounds, with 49.4 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest going to the Bahamas, Bermuda, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Islands of Turks and Caicos, and United Arab Emirates. Exports of frozen catfish fillets reported for November 2012 totaled 49.2 thousand pounds, going to the Bahamas, China, and St. Maarten.

Import and export data are compiled by the United States Census Bureau.

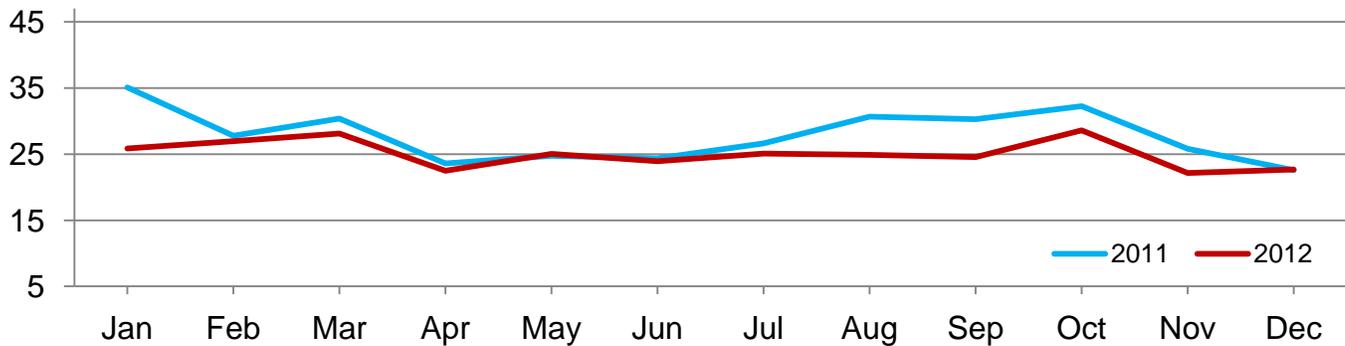
## Farm-Raised Catfish Processed and Prices Paid to Producers by Month – United States: 2011-2012

Month	Round weight processed								
	Monthly			Cumulative			Price per pound <sup>1</sup>		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	Change from 2011
(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	
January .....	35,076	25,843	74	35,076	25,843	74	0.931	1.248	0.317
February .....	27,782	26,950	97	62,858	52,793	84	1.003	1.229	0.226
March .....	30,372	28,098	93	93,230	80,891	87	1.075	1.201	0.126
April .....	23,605	22,463	95	116,835	103,354	88	1.141	1.167	0.026
May .....	24,749	25,009	101	141,584	128,363	91	1.169	1.038	-0.131
June .....	24,337	23,938	98	165,921	152,301	92	1.231	0.934	-0.297
July .....	26,595	25,056	94	192,516	177,357	92	1.252	0.843	-0.409
August .....	30,680	24,886	81	223,196	202,243	91	1.277	0.798	-0.479
September .....	30,271	24,535	81	253,467	226,778	89	1.275	0.793	-0.482
October .....	32,264	28,596	89	285,731	255,374	89	1.262	0.803	-0.459
November .....	25,814	22,124	86	311,545	277,498	89	1.257	0.822	-0.435
December .....	22,598	22,653	100	334,143	300,151	90	1.251	0.830	-0.421

<sup>1</sup> Quantity processed by major processors and the prices paid for fish delivered to the processing plant's door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling. Price also includes any discounts or premiums for size or quality, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

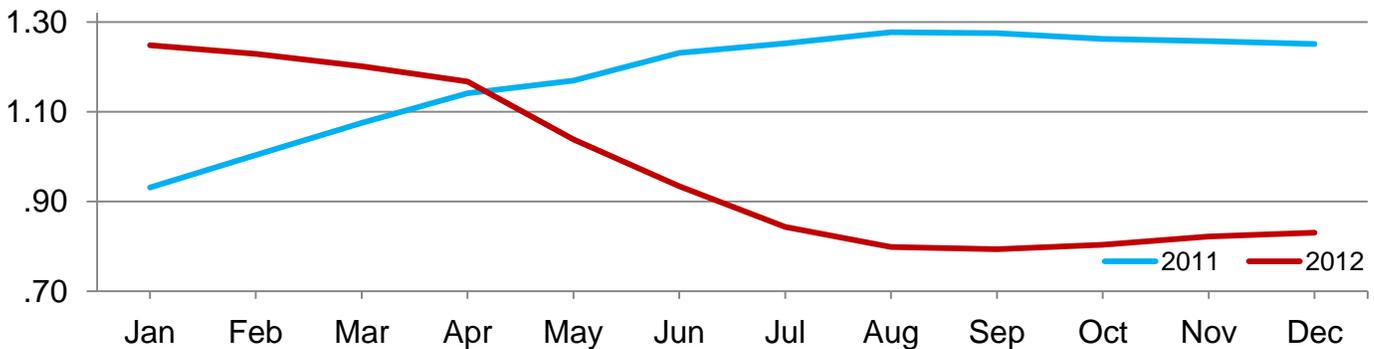
### Catfish Processed – United States

Million pounds



### Average Catfish Grower Price – United States

Dollars per pound



**Processed Farm-Raised Catfish Sales Volume and Average Price by Month – United States:  
2011 and 2012**

Item <sup>1</sup>	Sales volume			Average price <sup>2</sup>		
	December 2011	November 2012	December 2012	December 2011	November 2012	December 2012
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(dollars per pound)	(dollars per pound)	(dollars per pound)
<b>Fresh fish</b>						
Whole						
Round and gutted .....	936	1,212	1,309	1.81	1.40	1.37
Whole dressed .....	942	992	986	2.97	2.19	2.21
Total .....	1,878	2,204	2,295	2.45	1.81	1.78
Other						
Steaks .....	40	50	48	3.63	2.83	2.84
Nuggets .....	357	354	361	1.87	1.53	1.54
Other .....	23	18	16	4.80	4.30	4.47
Total .....	420	422	425	2.20	1.80	1.80
Fillets .....	1,877	1,913	1,934	4.78	3.73	3.73
Total fresh .....	4,175	4,539	4,654	3.47	2.62	2.59
<b>Frozen fish</b>						
Whole dressed .....	434	519	453	3.11	2.73	2.78
Other						
Steaks .....	33	38	40	3.30	2.65	2.61
Nuggets .....	1,654	1,516	1,243	1.40	1.40	1.41
Other .....	704	1,143	819	4.38	3.74	3.55
Total .....	2,391	2,697	2,102	2.30	2.41	2.27
Fillets .....	4,321	5,597	5,507	4.29	3.21	3.17
Total frozen .....	7,146	8,813	8,062	3.55	2.94	2.91
<b>Fresh and frozen fish</b>						
Whole						
Round and gutted .....	936	1,212	1,309	1.81	1.40	1.37
Whole dressed .....	1,376	1,511	1,439	3.01	2.38	2.39
Total .....	2,312	2,723	2,748	2.58	1.98	1.94
Other						
Steaks .....	73	88	88	3.48	2.75	2.74
Nuggets .....	2,011	1,870	1,604	1.48	1.42	1.44
Other .....	727	1,161	835	4.39	3.75	3.57
Total .....	2,811	3,119	2,527	2.29	2.33	2.19
Fillets .....	6,198	7,510	7,441	4.44	3.34	3.32
Total fresh and frozen fish .....	11,321	13,352	12,716	3.52	2.83	2.79

<sup>1</sup> For further detail, please refer to the terms and definitions section of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Gross value FOB plant.

## Processed Farm-Raised Catfish Ending Inventory by Month – United States: 2011 and 2012

Item <sup>1</sup>	Ending inventory		
	December 2011 (1,000 pounds)	November 2012 (1,000 pounds)	December 2012 (1,000 pounds)
<b>Fresh fish</b>			
Whole			
Round and gutted .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Whole dressed .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total .....	76	95	78
Other			
Steaks .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets .....	46	51	55
Other .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total .....	59	57	56
Fillets .....	331	254	978
Total fresh .....	466	406	1,112
<b>Frozen fish</b>			
Whole dressed .....	464	761	666
Other			
Steaks .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets .....	1,761	820	927
Other .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total .....	2,290	1,413	1,519
Fillets .....	9,683	7,516	6,380
Total frozen .....	12,437	9,690	8,565
<b>Fresh and frozen fish</b>			
Whole			
Round and gutted .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Whole dressed .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total .....	540	856	744
Other			
Steaks .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets .....	1,807	871	982
Other .....	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total .....	2,349	1,470	1,575
Fillets .....	10,014	7,770	7,358
Total fresh and frozen fish .....	12,903	10,096	9,677

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

<sup>1</sup> For further detail, please refer to the terms and definitions section of this report.

## Catfish Imports by Month – United States: 2011-2012

[Data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Month	Imports					
	Ictalurus spp.			Total <sup>1</sup>		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)
January .....	1,301	2,028	156	16,276	25,551	157
February .....	1,015	1,317	130	13,790	15,238	111
March .....	211	528	250	9,133	15,280	167
April .....	216	534	247	13,325	19,756	148
May .....	113	345	305	16,314	20,100	123
June .....	11	352	3,200	14,643	18,847	129
July .....	19	73	384	18,034	22,604	125
August .....	39	84	215	18,383	23,655	129
September .....	171	202	118	18,576	22,868	123
October .....	838	202	24	20,335	20,217	99
November .....	1,372	331	24	22,262	19,220	86
December .....	2,113			22,608		

<sup>1</sup> Includes freshwater imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes.

## Catfish Exports by Month – United States: 2011-2012

[Data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Month	Exports					
	Fresh			Frozen		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)
January .....	53.9	85.2	158	10.2	2.7	26
February .....	56.7	120.2	212	13.2	11.1	84
March .....	42.3	129.5	306	2.2	68.0	3,091
April .....	38.7	234.5	606	-	29.7	(X)
May .....	41.0	83.6	204	3.0	4.6	153
June .....	38.0	82.7	218	1.8	10.9	606
July .....	150.0	114.1	76	7.8	5.3	68
August .....	72.7	95.2	131	-	5.5	(X)
September .....	29.4	113.5	386	1.1	57.7	5,245
October .....	55.9	141.2	253	3.6	8.5	236
November .....	42.7	64.9	152	2.7	49.2	1,822
December .....	51.4			3.6		

- Represents zero.  
(X) Not applicable.

## Statistical Methodology

**Survey Procedures:** Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 17 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. However, NASS field offices are responsible for informing Headquarters staff of any new processing operations in their state to ensure complete survey coverage. Processors are contacted either by mail, telephone, fax or internet. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

**Estimating Procedures:** The *Catfish Processing* report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild captured fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and a reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 6 of this release. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price.

If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, prorating is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved.

One unique feature of the *Catfish Processing* report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Import and export data for catfish, which are compiled by the United States Census Bureau, are also included in this report.

**Revision Policy:** Revisions may be necessary in the previous month's publication based on late reports received from plants. These revisions are made to improve month to month relationships. In February, all monthly estimates for the previous year are reviewed and subject to revision. This review is primarily based on data that may have been received after the original estimates were published.

**Reliability:** Estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

### Processing data were compiled in cooperation with the following processors:

America's Catch, Inc.	Heartland Catfish
Carolina Classics Catfish, LLC	Lake's Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
Consolidated Catfish Producers, LLC	Pride of the Pond
Delta Supreme Fish Processors	Prime Line, Inc.
Fish Breeders of Idaho, Inc.	Seabrook Seafood, Inc.
Freshwater Farms Products, LLC	Simmons Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
Guidry Catfish, Inc.	SouthFresh Farms
Harings Pride Catfish	*Superior Fish Products
Harvest Select Catfish, Inc.	

\*Estimated

## Terms and Definitions Used for Catfish Processing Estimates

**Average Price Paid to Producers:** Refers to the price of fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include any adjustments based on year-end settlements.

**Fillets:** Boned sides of the fish, cut lengthwise away from the backbone. Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

**Fresh Fish:** Fish intended for immediate consumption. Also referred to as ice-packed.

**Frozen Fish:** Fish which are individually quick frozen and glazed (IQF) or individually bagged and bulk frozen.

***Ictalurus spp.:*** All species under this genus, which includes channel catfish, blue catfish, and other catfish species.

**Nuggets:** Small fillets cuts from below the rib section of the fish and usually includes weight of breading and added ingredients.

**Other Products:** Includes steaks, nuggets, and all other products not separately reported including the weight of breading and added ingredients.

***Pangasius spp.:*** All species under this genus, which includes basa, tra, stuchi catfish, and other catfish species.

**Round & Gutted Only:** Fish with no processing done or viscera only removed.

**Round Weight:** The term for a fish's live weight.

**Siluriformes:** The scientific order which contains all families of catfish.

**Steaks:** Cross-section cuts from larger dressed fish.

**Strips:** Finger size pieces of fish cut from fillets and usually includes breading or added ingredients.

**Whole Dressed:** Weight of whole fish with only head, viscera, and skin removed. Generally, 60 percent of the live weight remains as dressed fish.

## Information Contacts

Listed below are the commodity specialists in the Livestock Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information. E-mail inquiries may be sent to [nass@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass@nass.usda.gov)

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Bruce Boess, Head, Poultry and Specialty Commodities Section .....	(202) 720-4447
Cody Brokmeyer – Poultry Slaughter, Turkey Hatchery, Turkeys Raised .....	(202) 690-3237
David Colwell – Cold Storage .....	(202) 720-8784
LaKeya Jones – Catfish Processing, Catfish Production, Trout Production, Census of Aquaculture, Honey, Mink .....	(202) 720-0585
Dawn Keen – Egg Products .....	(202) 720-4448
Kim Linonis – Layers, Eggs .....	(202) 690-8632
Miste Salmon – Broiler Hatchery, Chicken Hatchery .....	(202) 720-3244

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- Both national and state specific reports are available via a free e-mail subscription. To set-up this free subscription, visit <http://www.nass.usda.gov> and in the “Follow NASS” box under “Receive reports by Email,” click on “National” or “State” to select the reports you would like to receive.

For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, or e-mail: [nass@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass@nass.usda.gov).

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